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ABSTRACT

A college-level course in international understanding developed in Japan is described. The course was designed in response to a study of Japanese students' learning strategies, and focused on learning about various national cultures and lifestyles through encounters with guest speakers from a variety of countries. Because it was anticipated that students would be unfamiliar with conversational English due to traditional teaching methods, and might have difficulty coping with content-based discussion on international understanding, the course design included group study and presentations about each country before the guest's talk. The report describes the initial survey of students' preferred learning strategies, the theoretical basis for the course, course design, and participating students' feedback and self-evaluation. Students expressed general satisfaction with both the opportunities the course afforded for global awareness and their improved ability to communicate in English. Contains 10 references. (MSE)

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Learning About Foreign Cultures in English

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ED 413 785

This paper is a description of the creation of a low intermediate content-based course, "International Understanding Course," created in response to a survey of Japanese students' preferred learning styles. The course focused on learning about various national cultures and lifestyles through encounters with guest speakers from various countries. Student feedback indicated general satisfaction both with the opportunities for global awareness made possible by the course, and with improved ability to communicate in English.[1]

Introduction

In a survey of students' learning styles and preferences conducted at Trident College in 1992, it became clear that the students' first priority is to learn through using English to communicate with foreigners. It was for this reason that the "International Understanding Course" was created. Two main problems were anticipated: I) the students are not used to communication-oriented English classes but, rather, traditional language classes in which the target language is taught for its own sake, II) the students' English ability would not be sufficient to cope with a content-based English course on international understanding. To respond to these anticipated problems, the course design includes group study and presentations about countries before guests' talks and preparation for interviews with English speaking people.

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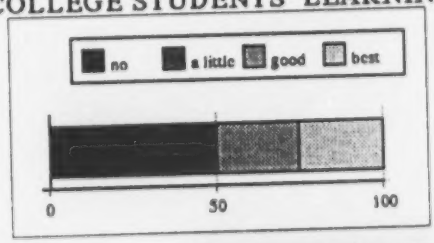
Following the course, students' feedback show that the majority of students were satisfied with the course, gained greater global awareness and improved their ability to communicate. In this paper, the following points are discussed: I.survey of students' learning styles. II.theoretical frameworks for International Understanding Course III.course design IV.students' feedback and self-evaluation.

I. Survey of Students' Learning Styles

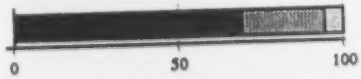
The students at Trident College are young Japanese adults aged from eighteen to twenty. They enter the college after finishing six years of English formal instruction at high school. The English major students' average score for TOEFL ITP tests is approximately 420.[2]

Living in an almost homogeneous society within the first language environment, students rarely have opportunities to meet English speaking people and to use the target language in real situations. Under such conditions, what are the learners' needs for English language classes? To find the answer to this question was the aim of the survey. The questionnaire suggested in David Nunan's book, "Understanding Language Classrooms" (1989), was used. The results were as follows:

THE SURVEY OF TRIDENT COLLEGE STUDENTS' LEARNING STYLE

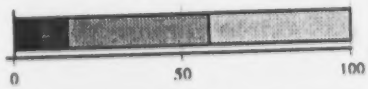


1. In English class, I like to learn by reading.



2.In class, I like to listen to and use cassettes.

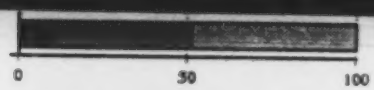
3. In class, I like to learn by games.



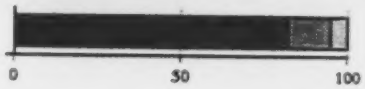
4. In class, I like to learn by conversations.

2

5. In class, I like to learn by pictures, films, videos.

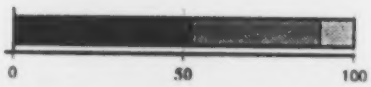


6.I want to write everything in my notebook.

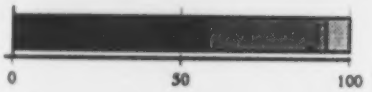


7. I like to have my own textbook.

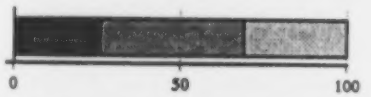
8. I like the teacher to explain everything to us.



9.I like the teacher to give us problems to work on.



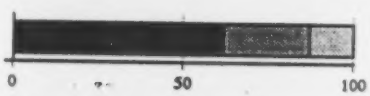
10.I like the teacher to help me talk about my interests.



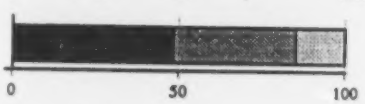
11. I like the teacher to tell me all my mistakes.

12. I like the teacher to let me find my mistakes.

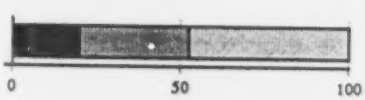
13. I like to study English by myself.



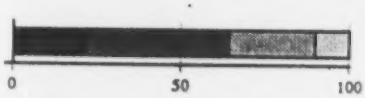
14. I like to learn English by talking in pairs.



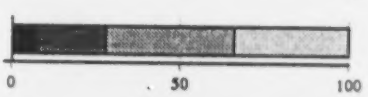
15. I like to learn English in small groups.



16.I like to learn English with the whole class.

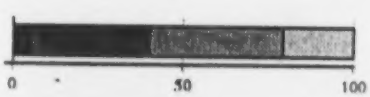


17.I like to go out with the class and practice English.

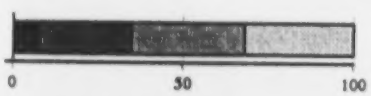


18. I like to study grammar.

19. I like to learn many words.

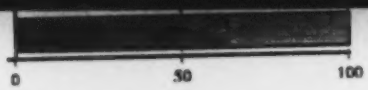


20. I like to practice the sounds and pronunciation.

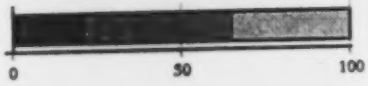


21. I like to learn English words by seeing them

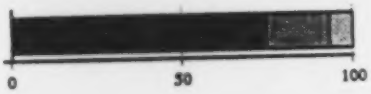
22. I like to learn English by hearing them.



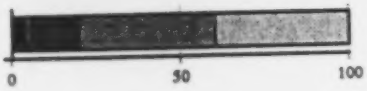
23. I like to learn English words by doing something.



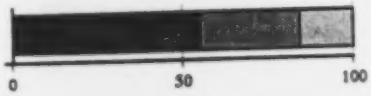
24. At home, I like to learn by reading newspapers etc.



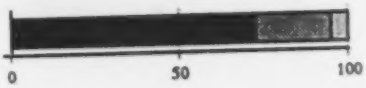
25. At home, I like to learn by watching TV in English.



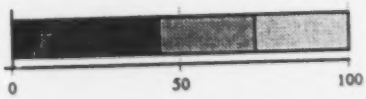
26. At home, I like to learn by using cassettes.



27. At home, I like to learn by studying English books.

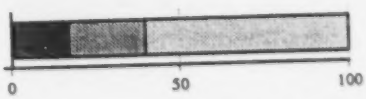


28. I like to learn talking to friends in English.



29. I like to learn by watching/listening to native speakers of English.

30. I like to learn by using English to communicate with foreigners.



According to the responses above, there are some characteristics of students' general learning styles; the majority of students at Trident College do not like reading, grammar, or studying English books. Instead, they like to learn by conversations, pictures, films, and videos. What is most distinctive is their need for communicative competence. More than 80 percent of the students think using English to communicate with foreigners is the best way or a good way to learn. Based on these results, a new English course, "International Understanding Course" was designed.

II. Theoretical Frameworks on International Understanding Course

It is said that second language learners learn the target language most efficiently when it is presented and used in a comprehensible and meaningful context the learners are interested in (Krashen,1984)(Swain,1985). The above mentioned results of the survey concerning students' learning styles at Trident College showed that students themselves were already aware that language learning in the communicative environment fulfills the goals for their language acquisition.

Also, the results of the survey supports Mohan's view:

> "The students can most effectively acquire a second language when the task of language learning becomes incidental to the task of communicating with someone about some topic which is inherently interesting to the student."(1986)

Developing Mohan's view to relate language teaching and content teaching, Brinton clarifies the following conditions which a content based second language course should satisfy and at the same time are essential to second language aquisition:

1) The content-based language curriculum takes into account the interests and needs of the learners.
2) It incorporates the eventual uses the learner will make of the target language.
3) It builds on the students' previous learning experiences.
4) It allows a focus on use as well as on usage.
5) It offers learners the necessary conditions for second language learning by exposing them to meaningful language in use.(1989)

When designing the new course at Trident College, it was considered that these conditions listed by Brinton should be included in theoretical frameworks: a content-based global education

approach to language teaching, an integrated student-centered program, and a functional approach for the actual use of the target language.

Brinton also suggests a three content-based models program (1989,19): theme-based, sheltered and adjunct models. A theme or topic-based language course is organized according to the syllabus of topics. A language teacher is in charge of curriculum/syllabus design and materials development, and gives the content material to students. The program is for an ES/FL course, which can be applied for the students whose proficiency levels in the second language are low to advanced. Sheltered courses originate from the tradition of elementary and secondary immersion education. In this case, a content instructor is responsible for teaching non-native speakers whose proficiency levels are intermediate to high. In the adjunct model, the instruction is given by the cooperation of content instructors and language instructors to help students with high intermediate to advanced proficiency levels to develop academic study skills.

Although the International Understanding Course belongs to theme-based model, it is necessary to modify some parts of the model suggested by Brinton and create a new model which is suitable for the learners' situation; that is, to help linguistically limited students to effectively learn about the content, foreign cultures, and communication skills, in the first language environment.[3]

III. Course Design of International Understanding Course

This is a one year elective course for English major students at Trident College, Hiroshima. When they enter the school, they take general English courses for English conversation, listening, writing, reading, and STEP test preparation.[4] They are what is called language centered courses. In the second semester starting in October, they major in one of the three specific courses such as going abroad, general English, and interpreters' courses, which are

focused on attainment of specific skills, while taking some elective courses. International Understanding Course, an 80 minute weekly elective course with approximately 20 students, starts in the second semester of the first year. In this course the target language is taught as a medium of learning about foreign cultures.

On the first day of the course the objectives of this course are made explicit to students in class: to give students opportunities to meet English speaking people and to help them learn about foreign cultures in English.

1. A Content-based Global Education Approach

Usually we spend four weeks to finish a project in class. Take the Canada Project for example. First, students decide that the next country they should invite a guest from should be Canada. In the public libraries, they gather materials about the country, give presentations about some subjects such as history, geography, national parks and Alberta, where the guest was from. They do most of their major research in their first language, Japanese, because the purpose of this activity is to have background knowledge which will be useful in comprehending the guest's talk in English.[5]

While the students are doing their tasks, the teacher tries to contact a guest and have a meeting concerning the guest's presentation. The teacher plays the role of an advisor to the guest as well as to the students. The guest is asked to make the class interactive and give students chances to communicate with the guest in class. The guest for the Canada project is Albert Ngai, a Chinese Canadian, who is selected intentionally so that students may get rid of their stereotype that Canadians must be Westerners with blonde hair and blue eyes, and understand that the country has a heterogeneous population.

Moreover, this project was carried in cooperation with other teachers in the English department. Two Canadian teachers helped students practice singing the national anthem, "O Canada" in their English conversation classes for a couple of weeks.

On the third week, the class have the guest come in, welcoming

him with the singing of the song. The guest introduces an information gap activity concerning Canada as an ice-breaker, followed by his talk about his hometown, Alberta, and his family, especially about his family's story as immigrants. Students are encouraged to take notes and ask him questions.

On the fourth week, students are given a "Great Canada Quiz" made by a Canadian teacher. They are allowed to bring in the materials, notes and handouts they have made or recieved during three week task work. The focus of such quizes are not on their knowldge of the target language but on what they learned about Canada. In the end, they write letters to the guest in English. While writing, they are advised to refer to the materials they have received during the project. Thus, students are tested for their understanding and retention of the previous three weeks' project.

2. An Integrated, Student-centered Program

Tasks	Skills
materials study	reading
attending to guest's presentation	listening+note-taking speaking communication skills
at the question and answer time	speaking and listening
letter writing	writing
interviews with foreigners outside the classroom	speaking, listening note-taking communication skills

2.1.Materials Study

In theme-based English language courses, it is often recommended to use authentic texts which are produced for and by native speakers of English and are not simplified for pedagogical purpose.(Brinton,1989) Japanese students whose TOEFL scores are

lower than 400, however, find it is hard to grasp the meaning in authentic texts. Since they cannot deal with the reading texts in the raw, language input should be modified so that they may be able to maintain their interests in the topic. The teacher has to assemble, adapt, and create appropriate materials.

After five years of trial and error since 1993 when the course started, it is found that students can cope with the texts written in a spoken language style such as a script or a scenario rather than general reading texts. There are some scripts of guests' talks, which have been taped and dictated by previous students, done as a graduation requirement. The scripts are used for reading materials in class. For example, there is a British photographer who is invited to the class every year to have a slide show concerning his volunteer work in India. During the preparation weeks before the guest's visit to class, students are advised to read the script and try to draw the image of the slides they are supposed to watch.

2.2.Guests' Presentations

The guests' presentations from September 1996 to July 1997 are as follows:

The Content of International Understanding Course
at Trident College

The First Term (September, 1996 - March, 1997)

September 24 The aim of the first lesson: awareness of North-South problems

Procedure:

1. Trading Game

   Aim: to make students aware that the process of trading tends to benefit the already powerful.

2. Discussion after the game:

   Each group reported how they felt during the game: "powerlessness" and a range of other emotions were

expressed.

October 1 Preparation for the "Peace & Love Festival" at which many foreign residents in Hiroshima get together

1. Guidance on how to interview someone on the street
2. Listing up of what students want to ask foreigners

October 6 Participation in the "Peace & Love Festival"

October 15 1. Students' report on their interviews

2. Listing up of the countries students want to invite guests from

October 22 Library study about Thailand

October 29 Group study

November 12: Presentation by each group

1. Thai food
2. About "Nihonjin-Gokko"(a true story about a Thai girl who disguised herself as the daughter of a Japanese ambassador to Thailand) written by Shinobu Yoshioka
3. some controversial issues relating to ASEAN
4. About volunteer activities in the Thai slums

November 19 Guest speaker:Ms.Pornnapa Levi Alvares

A slide show about Thailand

November 26 A quiz about Thailand and letter writing to the guest

December 3 Each group discussed the theme concerning South America

December 10 Library study about South America

December 17 Presentation by each group

1. About the Incan Civilization
2. Japanese immigrants in Brazil
3. The interview with Mr.Katai, an importer of goods in Peru
4. Introduction to the Argentine Republic

January 14 Guest speaker: Ms. Sylvia Yamasaki

"About the Argentine Republic and Japanese Immigrants in South America"

January 21: Letter writing to the guest

Preparation for the study of Hawaii (text reading offered by the next guest speaker)

January 28 Guest speaker: Ms.Joy Jarman:"Introduction to Hawaii and

Hula Dancing"

The Second Term (April,1997 - July,1997)

April 22 Group study about the Philippines

1. The Philippines' Trading
2. The History of the Philippines

May 13 Guests: Ms. Marie Ujihara, her mother and niece

1. Introduction to the Philippines
2. Survival Tagalog
3. Bamboo dancing

May 20 Letter writing to the guests
Group discussion about the theme concerning the U.S.

May 27 Group study

1. "The Face of the Future"-Living in the 21st Century in the U.S.
2. Comparison of the Prices in Japan and the U.S.
3. "Indians Place Their Bets"
4. The African Americans' History

June 3 Presentation by each group

June 12 Guests: Mr.and Mrs. Lathrop and Ms.Mikiko Okada

1. About their volunteer activity,"Never Again Campain"
2. A slide show about an American house
3. Some activities and dancing

June 17 Letter writing to Mr. and Mrs.Lathrop

June 24 Group study about Hongkong

July 1 Presentation by each group based on the newspaper articles about the restoration of HongKong to China

July 8 video show: "Our trip to HongKong" reported by students, Kei Tanaka, and Yasunobu Takata

July 15 Group study about India

1. About the Activity of "Friends of All"
2. "Using One's Head in India" written by Paul Quayle

July 22 Presentation by each group

July 29 A slide show about India by Paul Quayle, a British

photographer

The countries of the guests we have invited to class since 1993 are the Philippines, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Yugoslavia, England, the U.S., Tanzania, Canada, Thailand, Indonesia, China and Argentina. Students are exposed to "World Englishes", as advocated by Braj Kachru.[6] When the guests' knowledge of Japanese is much better than that of English, they are asked to give a talk in Japanese. As some students mention in their final essays, foreign guests' enthusiasm in speaking Japanese language impresses students and fosters their motivation for their further study of their second language, English.

2.3.At the Question and Answer Time

Japanese English language students are always encouraged to speak out especially by foreign teachers. They are, however, usually reticent in class, which native English language teachers often complain about. This is partly because of students' low English proficiency levels. It is too great a challenge for low level students to ask impromptu questions in English. There is a gap between what they are expected to do in an English class and their reality. To bridge this gap and encourage student speaking, the non-native teacher helps them think of questions to ask guests and put them into English after peer presentations about the next guest's country, followed by the guest's visit to the class. Each student brings a sheet of paper, on which his/her questions are written out, in class, and ask some of them to the guest at the question and answer time. It is observed that gradually some students become able to ask questions without such preparation toward the end of the course.

2.4. Letter Writing

After students have a guest, they write letters to him/her in English. There had been a guest who had written a reply to every student before. She was a Philippino woman, married to a Japanese man. She taught students survival Tagalog conversation and a bamboo

dance. The following letters were exchanged between a student and her.

Hiroshima, November 30, 1995

Dear Mari-san,

Thank you for your speech, it was good, I think. And thanks a lot for your cake. It was so delicious. I could learn about the Philippines by your talk. You are so charming and friendly that I could enjoy your lesson so much. I was surprised that your father is Spanish and your mother is Chinese, also your husband is Japanese. Your family is really international!!

Before I took your lesson, I had thought that Philippines is very poor coutry because I was influenced by TV, radio, magazines and so on.

So your lesson was so good for me. I will read instructive books about Philippines from now on. After your lesson, I became more interested in the Philippines. And in the near future, I would like to visit the Philippines. And I will read about my country because I found that you know a lot about your own country but I do not know about my own country. Your lesson made me notice it.

Take care of yourself and say hello to your family. I hope something happy will be done to you.

God bless you!

Yours sincerely,

Ako

Dear Ako-san,

I'm so happy to read your letter. It's so interesting, plus, I could feel your heart on it. Becides, you're good in English. It seems you're studying hard. Great!

I'm glad you like the cup cakes I made. It's one of our special delicacies and it's made from coconut which I ordered in Philippines, except for some ingredients which I bought here like condensed milk, egg, and baking powder.

Back to your letter, I'm glad that you understand every word I said, for you do know well in my country. Put aside the politics

for I hate it! Like you, I'm surprised too of what was being shown here in TV about the Philippines. Always the back side and dark stories. I couldn't believe it! I feel sorry for these people in media for they don't know what they're doing! Hope you could visit my country someday to see for yourself. Last but not least, I'm so delighted that I widen your knowledge and curiosity that knowing and learning about your country is a great honor.

Till here and good luck in your studies!

Yours Truly,

Marie Ujihara

These letters are the examples of communication in English by non-native speakers of English.

2.5.Interviews with foreigners outside the Classroom.

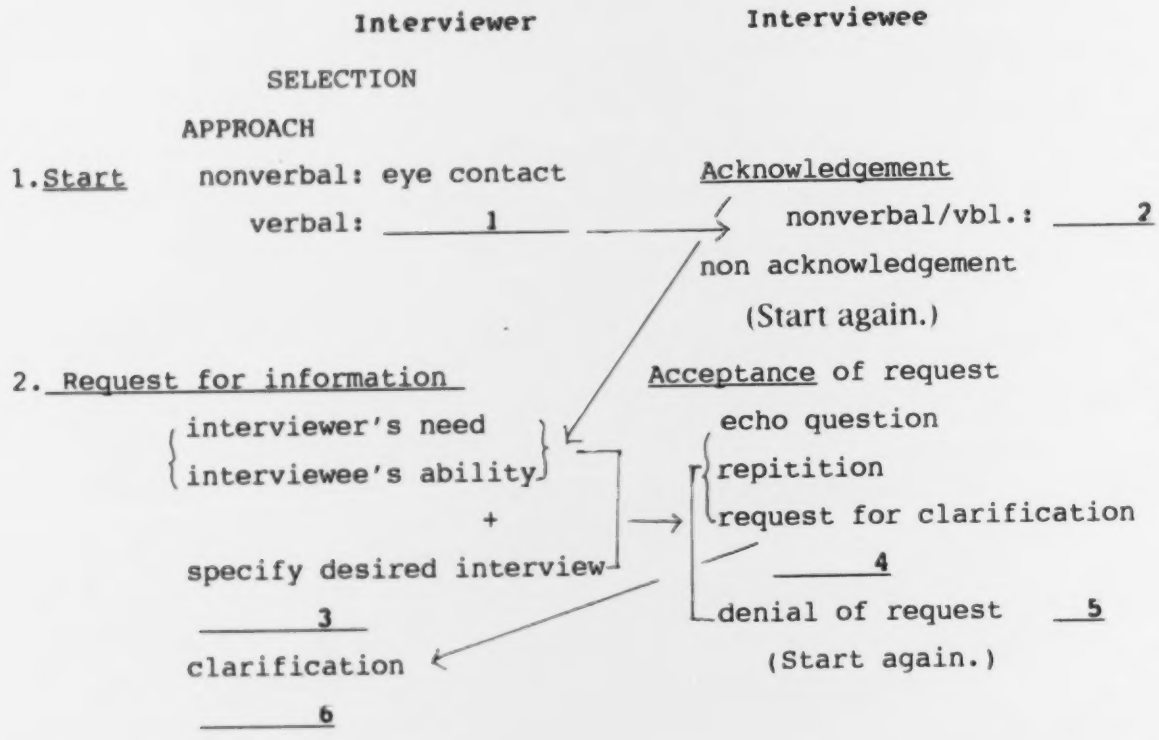
Acknowledging Krashen's claim that "comprehensible input" is essential to second language acquisition, Swain(1985), based on his data analysis of students of a French immersion program in Canada, points out that "comprehensible output" is also necessary to give learners opportunities for contexualized, meaningful use. He claims that the students do not have chances for conversational exchanges in the target language, which result in less output of his subjects compared with that of native students. He proves it based on his analysis of the students' oral and written production skills.

Brinton's case study on the intensive language course at the Free University of Berlin is another example of learners having less chances to develop their language production. Students in the ILC are all native German speakers who have six years of English instruction before they enter the course. German English language students took traditional second language classes in which teachers taught the target language in the first language using grammar-translation method.

Japanese EFL learners in the school settings are no exceptions. They share the following two problems with the above mentioned

cases: (1) Japanese EFL learners rarely have opportunities to use the target language for real communication. (2) They are exposed to a traditional language teaching method in high schools.[7] In the International Understanding Course, the main aim is to help students practice their knowledge of English in cross-cultural settings. Besides having guests in class, students go out of the school building and meet English speaking people. Before the task, the following chart is used to help students think of what they should say in each situation. They learn that there are some obligatory categories regardless to the language they use; they are openings, requests, the interviewee's acknowledgement, gratitude and closings. Moreover, non-verbal factors such as eye contact are explained because many Japanese people are not good at this, which sometimes causes cultural misunderstanding.

Some features of the structure of
"interviewing someone on the street:"



3. Provision of information

acknowledgement: 7
receipt: 8
confirmation: 9
request for clarification: 10 → clarification: 11

4. Gratitude: 12 ——→ Response: 13
5. Closure: 14 ——→ Closure: 14

This idea is from Introduction to Sociolinguistics, a graduate course of Georgetown University, Sheffrin; Fall 1984

Students bring a tape recorder and tape their interview with foreigners. After the interview, they transcribe their conversations. Here are two typical examples of students' interviews, one by a freshman student, one by sophomore students:

INTERVIEW 1

Freshman: Masami Naito

(At the "Peace-Love Festival")
Student: May I ask you some questions?
Foreigner: Yes.
S.: This is a school project. My name is Masami Naito. I am a student at Trident school. Are you from.....?
F.: America. Michigan.
S.: My teacher is from Michigan.
F.: A-ha.
S.: She name is Lora.
F.: Lora.
S.: Do you like movies?
F.: Yes.
S.: What kind of movies do you like?
F.: Ah.....comedies.
S.: Comedies? Who is your favorite actor or actress?

F.: Kevin Costner.

S.: Which movie do you recommend?

F.: "Dances with Wolves."

S.: Dances?

F.: Kevin Costner's movie, "Dances with Wolves."

S.: I will watch it.

F.: Good.

S.: Thank you.

F.: You are welcome.(laughing) *Doitashimashite.*(laughing)

S.: *Arigato gozaimashita.*(laughing) I was happy to talk with you.

Both: (laughing)

F.: How old are you?

S.: I'm eighteen.

F.: A-ha. University in Hiroshima?

S.: No. Ah... *Do iundatta* ?(to another student)

Another student: Academy.

S.: Academy. (To the foreigner)

F.: A-ha. Academy.

S.: Ah.....I'm studying English in Hiroshima.

F.: Your English is very good.

S.: Thank you. (laughing)

INTERVIEW 2

Sophomores: Akiko Miyamoto
Mika Endo
Yumie Yamagata

(At Hiroshima Station)

Student: Please tell me your name.

Foreigners: Read Rou and Chrichan River.

S.: Where are you from?

F.: America.

S.: What do you do in Japan?

F.: We are missionaries.

S.: What do you do?

F.: We proselytize to Japanese.

S.: What are you doing? For example.

F.: We go around to apartments, houses, and, er, streets everyday, ask people if they would like to hear about our message.

s.: What's your message?

F.: Our message is the purpose of life, and our relationship with God.

S.: What do you think about Japanese religion?

F.: Very interesting. Because in America I've never experienced Buddhism. I don't know anything about them. Everything I hear is new to me. It's very interesting.

S.: Do you know *Aum* religion? What do you think?

F.: Bad. Scary. They did bad things.

S.: Where are you going today?

F.: Today, we are returning to Izumo. We came here to Hiroshima yesterday, last night. We went to Fukuoka this morning.

S.: How long did you stay?

F.: 13 month stay.

S.: What is your favorite point about Hiroshima?

F.: I love Hiroshima. Hiroshima is very good because it's cool. Izumo is small, not fun, but it's a good city. Hiroshima is a very very good city.

Interview 1 was done by a freshman. All the questions asked by students had been prepared before the interview. Most of the conversation consists of repetitions of questions and answers. The other interview done by sophomores, on the other hand, shows the development of conversation with some functional skills such as request for clarification, "What are you doing? For example." Since the interviewer did not understand the underlined words, missionaries and to proselytize, she tried to clarify them. Each time she clarifies, the interviewee's explanation about his job becomes specific and she at last understands what he does, which

leads to the next spontaneous question, "What do you think about Japanese religion?", followed by another question which is more specific and about which most Japanese are concerned, "Do you know *Aum* religion?"[8] The student stated that all the questions except for the first one, "Where are you from?" were spontaneous.

These two interviews show that there is some improvement in Interview 2. As for their linguistic knowledge, there is less hesitation without any use of Japanese in Interview 2 and 100% of the sophomores' statements were complete sentences, compared to 68% of those of the freshman. It can be said that their communicative competence including social interaction has also improved while they are participating in such activities as to focus on the actual use of the target language in real situations.

These, however, are pre-activities for more meaningful conversations with foreigners in English. Students at Trident College are required to write research papers during the last semester of the second year. Some students find subjects for writing in what they have done in this course and try to develop them into research papers. Among their themes are "The Philippines - International Understanding," "Where I belong - Living as a Korean in Japan," and " A Survey on a Japanese Boy Shot in the U.S."

"The Philippines" contains the long interview with a Philippina, Ms. Marie Ujihara. After a long talk about general Philippino culture, she starts talking about her grandmother's experiences during World War II that her friend was raped by Japanese soldiers in front of her, which caused her impediment of speech for two years. In "Where I belong," the student reveals for the first time that she is a Korean Japanese. Her participation in activities in this course for one year encouraged her to define her own identity.[9] "A Survey on a Japanese Boy Shot Dead in the U.S." deals with a trial on a case of an American who shot a Japanese boy,[10] while a students' group started a survey about the Japanese people's opinions concerning the defendant's aquittal on manslaughter charge. They also interviewed American teachers. One

of them insisted that the Japanese should pay more attention on the difference of cultures and historical background between the two countries and another showed her deep sympathy with the Japanese boy with tears in her eyes. In the paper, the student concludes that they learned the importance of having broader view of things and overcoming the misunderstanding caused by cultural differences.

IV. Students' Feedback and Self-evaluation

Students write a final essay about what they learned in this course at the end of each semester. Each student decides which language, English or Japanese, he/she should use in the essay writing, so that those at low proficiency levels can express their opinions about the course. Students' opinions, which are collected from 123 essays, are categorized into the following eight headings:

	Number of students
1. Learning about cultures (77%)	
I learned about foreign countries. (cultures, customs, and eating habits)	67
I became interested in foreign countries.	17
I realized that I had known little about the countries guests were from.	9
I learned how foreigners live in Japan.	1
Japanese students should learn other foreign languages as well as English during the period of compulsory education.	1
2.Communication (40.7%)	
I could have chances to communicate with foreigners.	35
I could actually use my knowledge of English.	6
I now feel that the distance between foreigners and me has become shorter.	3
We should have more chances to communicate with foreigners.	3
I was happy when I asked questions to guests.	2
I want to talk with the guests more.	1
3.Attitudes toward foreigners (30.9%)	
I could get rid of my prejudices or stereotypes	

against foreigners. 14

I feel ashamed that I used to take a narrow view of things. 7

I realized that I had been interested only in Western countries before. 5

I realized we all are the same even if we belong to different countries. 4

Difference of nationalities is not important. 3

I became able to put myself in another's place. 2

I realized people's sense of value is different according to their nationalities. 2

I could take the first step to be a global citizen. 1

4. Awareness of one's own identity (12.2%)

I learned how foreigners look at Japan. 8

I have to know more about my country. 5

Foreign guests' talk gave me chances to think about my country. 2

5. About the guests (5.7%)

Guests seem to be proud of their countries. 3

I was impressed with the guests'enthusiasm at their presentations. 2

I think guests have their firm opinions and ideas. 2

6.Awareness of lack of knowledge (8.9%)

I am sorry that I could not express my ideas and opinions explicitly at the discussion. 6

I feel sorry that my knowledge of English is not good enough. 3

Even when I prepared for my presentation, I could not do it well. 2

7.Motivation for further study (10.6%)

I would like to put what I learned in this course to further study. 13

8. About the course (78%)

It was fun. 37

This course was interesting. 27

I positively participated in class activities. 14

I am satisfied with the course. 6

I was unwilling to participate in class activities. 5

I could exchange opinions with classmates through discussion. 2

I realized how difficult it is to persuade others. 2

I learned how to work together in class activities. 2

I learned how difficult it is to give a presentation in class. 1

Besides this open-ended evaluation task, students evaluate themselves according to the following criteria: (1)class attendance (2)participation in activities (3)letter writing, and (4) results of quizzes.

Conclusion

The International Understanding Course at Trident College differs in some respects from traditional language-centered courses. First, students' competency for use in real communication with English speaking people is the main difference. Second, activities to overstep classroom English are introduced. Also, no textbooks or English teaching materials are used in class.

Moreover, the course is different from immersion programs or content-based instructions in the context of higher education, though it does have something in common with all three programs: learning through the medium of the target language. The goal of immersion programs is for learners to attain bilingual level competency. Also, content-based instructions at universities encourage students to cope with academic studies. On the other hand, the major characteristics of the course design discussed in this paper lies in offering opportunities for Japanese young adults to encounter people of different nationalities. Most important of all, this new course was set up based on the result of the analysis of students' preferences.

According to students' feedback, 68 % of them show positive opinions concerning this course. What is noteworthy is that most of their opinions about what they learned are related to content rather

than language learning. It can be concluded that the target language, English, is used as a tool to fulfill their objectives.

Notes

1.This paper is based on the presentation at the 22nd Annual JALT International Conference in Hiroshima, Japan, in November, 1996.

2.Institutional Testing Program scores are for use by the administering institutions only, but the scores are correlative to the TOEFL test scores.

3. In *A CBI Curriculum Innovation* Tim Murphy discusses beneficial outcomes of content based instruction program in higher education in Japan.(25-29) The International Understanding Course, however, does not aim at academic study.

4.STEP(Society for Testing English Proficiency) test started in Japan in 1962. It has become one of the major English proficiency tests in Japan with 1,500,000 examinees every time it is held in spring and fall.

5. Referring to immersion program for limited-English speaking students, Krashen noted that instruction of core subjects by first language is "to provide background information that makes English input comprehensible." (Krashen:1984)

6.At the 22nd Annual JALT International Conference held in Hiroshima, Japan, in November,1996, Braj Kachru discussed how to put the theory of World Englishes into practice in language classrooms.

7.Ken Tamai (the then English teacher at Kobe Municipal Fukiai Senior High School) concluded a survey concerning which skill of writing, reading, listening and speaking teachers spend time most in teaching English. 312 English teachers from 83 junior high schools answered the questionnaire. The ranking is 1.reading 2.writing

3.listening and 4.speaking. When asked about what the ideal ranking is, they answered as follows: 1.speaking 2.listening 3.reading and 4.writing. The skills the teachers are good at teaching are 1.reading 2.writing 3.speaking, and 4.listening. Tamai notes that the class procedures tend to be influenced by the teachers' favorite area. From this data, it can be assumed that Japanese high school students are not given enough time for oral communication in class.

Also, Tim Murphy explains his CBI innovation at Nanzan University as an antithesis to "translation" courses taught by Japanese English language instructors. Therefore, it can be said that the grammar-translation method is still deeply rooted in the Japanese classroom setting.

8.The religious group caused serious social problems in Japan because of their indiscriminate murder of citizens by toxic gases, killing of a lawyer's family and former believers.

9. Approximately 670,000 Korean people, which is 50% of all the foreign residents in Japan, live in Japan as of December 31, 1994. They were forced to come to Japan as laborors at the bottom of the social scale. Many of them conceal the fact that they are Korean descendants because of racial discrimination.

10. This shooting death took place in October, 1992, in Baton Rouge, Lousiana. Yoshiyuki Hattori, a Japanese exchange student, and his American friend knocked on Rodney Peairs' door while wondering if the house might be the place for a Halloween party. Peairs shot the Japanese boy after the warning to freeze. The court decided to clear Peairs of manslaughter.

Appendix

1.Quiz:If the statement is true, write T. If it is not, write F.

1.( ) Bangkok is the fourth capital in Thai history.

2.( ) Bangkok is as large as Hiroshima.

3.( ) The first capital of Thailand was Ayutthaya.

4.( ) The population of Thailand is approximately 60,000,000.

5.( ) Food shortage is one of the most serious problems in Thailand.

6.( ) Ms.Sylvia Yamasaki is the third generation of Japanese Argentinians.

7.( ) The capital of Argentina is Lima.

8.( ) The official language in Argentina is Spanish.

9.( ) The Argentine president's house is called "a white house."

10.( ) There are as many cattle as people in Argentina.

11.( ) Hawaii is the 51st state after Alaska.

12.( ) Hawaiian relatives live in New Zealand, Fiji, and Samoa.

13.( ) They do not have snakes in Hawaii.

14.( ) The Hawaii state animal is the wild boar.

15.( ) Hula dancers still wear grass skirts.

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